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THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.—BOHEMIA.

WHOEVER knows Bohemian London, knows the smoking-room of the Cheyne Row Club. No more comfortable or congenial divan exists anywhere between Regent Circus and Hyde Park Corner than that chosen paradise of unrecognised geniuses. The Cheyne Row Club is not large, indeed, but it prides itself upon being extremely select—too select to admit upon its list of members peers, politicians, country gentlemen, or inhabitants of eligible family residences in Mayfair or Belgravia. Two qualifications are understood to be indispensable in candidates for membership: they must be truly great, and they must be unsuccessful. Possession of a commodious suburban villa excludes, *ipso facto*.

The Cheyne Row Club is emphatically the headquarters of the great Bohemian clan; the gathering-place of unhung artists, unread novelists, unpaid poets, and unheeded social and political reformers generally. Hither flock all the choicest spirits of the age during that probationary period when society in its slow and lumbering fashion is spending twenty years in discovering for itself the bare fact of their distinguished existence. Here Maudle displays his latest designs to Postlethwaite's critical and admiring eye; here Postlethwaite pours his honeyed sonnets into Maudle's receptive and sympathetic tympanum. Everybody who is anybody has once been a member of the 'dear old Cheyne Row.' Royal Academicians and Cabinet Ministers and Society Journalists and successful poets still speak with lingering pride and affection of the days when they lunched there, as yet undiscovered, on a single chop and a glass of draught claret by no means of the daintiest. Not that the Club can number any of them now on its existing roll-call: the Cheyne Row is for

prospective celebrity only; accomplished facts transfer themselves at once to a statelier site in Pall Mall near the Duke of York's Column. Rising merit frequents the Tavern, as scoffers profanely term it: risen greatness basks rather on the lordly stuffed couches of Waterloo Place.

No man, it has been acutely observed, remains a Bohemian when he has daughters to marry. The pure and blameless ratepayer avoids Prague. As soon as Smith becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer, as soon as Brown takes silk, as soon as Robinson is elected an Associate, as soon as Tompkins publishes his popular novel, they all incontinently with one accord desert the lesser institution in the Piccadilly byway, and pass on their names, their honours, their hats, and their subscriptions to the dignified repose of the Athenæum. For them, the favourite haunt of judge and bishop: for the young, the active, the struggling, and the incipient, the chop and claret of the less distinguished but more lively caravansera by the Green Park purlieus.

In the smoking-room of this truly great and unsuccessful Bohemian society, at the tag-end of a London season, one warm evening in a hot July, Hugh Massinger, of the Utter Bar, sat lazily by the big bow window, turning over the pages of the last number of the *Charing Cross Review*. That he was truly great, nobody could deny. He was in very fact a divine bard, or, to be more strictly accurate, the author of a pleasing and melodious volume of minor poetry. Even away from the Cheyne Row Club, none but the most remote of country-cousins—say from the wilder parts of Cornwall or the crofter-clad recesses of the Isle of Skye—could have doubted for a moment the patent fact that Hugh Massinger was a distinguished (though unknown) poet of

the modern school, so admirably did he fit his part in life as to features, dress, and general appearance. Indeed, malicious persons were wont at times unkindly to insinuate that Hugh was a poet, not because he found in himself any special aptitude for stringing verses or building the lofty rhyme, but because his face and bearing imperatively compelled him to adopt the thankless profession of bard in self-justification and self-defence. This was ill-natured, and it was also untrue; for Hugh Massinger had lisped in numbers—at least in penny ones—ever since he was able to lisp in print at all. He had taken to poetry almost from his very cradle; and had astonished his father at sixteen by a rhymed version of an ode of Horace, worthy the inspiration of the great Dr Watts himself, and not, perhaps, far below the poetic standard of Mr Martin Farquhar Tupper. At Oxford he had perpetrated a capital Newdigate; and two years after gaining his fellowship at Oriel, he had published anonymously, in parchment covers, *Echoes from Callimachus, and other Poems*, which had fairly succeeded by careful nursing in attaining the dignity of a second edition under his own name. So that Massinger's claim to the sodality of the craft whose workmen are 'born not made' might perhaps be considered as of the genuine order, and not entirely dependent, as cynics averred, upon his long hair, his pensive eyes, his dark-brown cheek, or the careless twist of his necktie and his shirt-collar.

Nevertheless, even in these minor details of the poetical character, it must candidly be confessed that Hugh Massinger outstripped by several points many of the more recognised bards whose popular works are published in regulation green-cloth octaves, and whose hats and cloaks, of unique build, adorn with their presence the vestibule pegs of the Athenæum itself. The undistinguished author of *Echoes from Callimachus* was tall and slight, and a trifle affected-looking. That his face was beautiful, extremely beautiful, even a hostile reviewer in the organ of another clique could hardly venture seriously to deny: those large sad eyes, that long black hair, that exquisitely chiselled and melancholy mouth, would alone have sufficed to attract attention and extort admiration anywhere in the universe, or at the very least in the solar system. Hugh Massinger, in short, was (like Coleridge) a noticeable man. It would have been impossible to pass him by, even in a crowded street, without a hurried glance of observation and pleasure at his singularly graceful and noble face. He looked and moved every inch a poet; delicate, refined, cultivated, expressive, and sicklied o'er with that pale cast of thought which modern æstheticism so cruelly demands as a proof of attachment from her highest votaries. Yet at the same time, in spite of deceptive appearances to the contrary, he was strong in muscular strength: a wiry man, thin, but well knit: one of those fallacious, uncanny, long-limbed creatures who can scale an Alp or tramp a score or so of miles before breakfast, while looking as if a short stroll through the Park would kill them outright with sheer exhaustion. Altogether, a typical poet of the newest model, that dark and handsome æsthetic-

looking man: and as he sat there carelessly, with the paper held before him, in an unstudied attitude of natural grace, many a painter might have done worse than choose the author of *Echoes from Callimachus* for the subject of a pretty Academy pot-boiler.

So Warren Relf, the unknown marine artist, thought to himself, in his armchair opposite, as he raised his eyes by chance from the etchings in the *Portfolio*, and glanced across casually with a hasty look at the undiscovered poet.

'Has the *Charing Cross* reviewed your new volume yet?' he asked politely, his glance meeting Massinger's while he flung down the paper on the table beside him.

The poet rose and stood with his hands behind his back in an easy posture before the empty fireplace. 'I believe it has deigned to assign me half a column of judicious abuse,' he answered, half yawning, with an assumption of profound indifference and contempt for the *Charing Cross Review* and all its ideas or opinions collectively. 'To tell you the truth, the subject's one that doesn't interest me. In the first place, I care very little for my own verses. And in the second place, I don't care at all for reviewers generally, or for the *Charing Cross Snarler* and its kind in particular. I disbelieve altogether in reviews, in fact. Familiarity breeds contempt. To be quite candid, I've written too many of them.'

'If criticism in literature's like criticism in art,' the young painter rejoined, smiling, 'why, with the one usual polite exception of yourself, Massinger, I can't say I think very much of the critics.—But what do you mean, I should like to know, by saying you don't care for your own verses? Surely no man can do anything great, in literature or art—or in shoe-blackening or pig-sticking, if it comes to that—unless he thoroughly believes in his own vocation.'

Massinger laughed a musical laugh. 'In shoe-blackening or pig-sticking,' he said with a delicate curl of his thin lips, 'that's no doubt true; but in verse-making, query? Who on earth at the present day could even pretend to himself to believe in poetry? Time was, I daresay—though I'm by no means sure of it—when the bard, hoary old impostor, was a sort of prophet, and went about the world with a harp in his hand, and a profound conviction in his innocent old heart that when he made "Sapphic" rhyme to "traffic," or produced a triolet on the theme of "Catullus," "lull us," and "cull us," he was really and truly enriching humanity with a noble gift of divine poesy. But who in London, in the nineteenth century, can for a moment affect to believe in the efficacy of poetry? Look at this last new volume of my own, for example!—You won't look at it, of course, I'm well aware, but that's no matter: nobody ever does look at my immortal works, I'm only too profoundly conscious. I cut them myself in a dusty copy at all the libraries, in order to create a delusive impression on the mind of the public that I've had at least a solitary reader. But let that pass.'

Warren Relf looked up at him a little uneasily. 'I don't like to hear you run down poetry like that,' he said, with an evident tinge of disapprobation. 'I'm not a poet myself, of course; but still I'm sure it isn't all a mere matter of rhymes

and refrains, of epithets and prettinesses. What touches our hearts lies deeper than mere expression, I'm certain. It lies in the very core and fibre of the man. There are passages even in your own poems—though you're a great deal too cynical to admit it now—that came straight out of the depths of your own heart, I venture to conjecture—those Lines on a Lock of Hair, for example.—Aha, cynic! there I touched you on the raw.—But if you think so lightly of poetry as a pursuit, as you say, I wonder why you ever came to take to it.

'Take to it, my dear fellow! What an Arcadian idea! As if men nowadays chose their sphere in life deliberately. Why, what on earth makes any of us ever take to anything, I should like to know, in this miserable workaday modern world of ours? Because we're simply pitchforked into it by circumstances. Does the crossing-sweeper sweep crossings, do you suppose, for example, by pure preference for the profession of a sweep? Does the milkman get up at five in the morning because he sees in the purveying of skim-milk to babes and sucklings a useful and important and even necessary industry to the rising generation of this great Metropolis? Does the dustman empty the domestic bin out of disinterested regard for public sanitation? or the engine-driver dash through rain and snow in a drear-nighted December like a Comtist prophet, out of high and noble enthusiasm of humanity?' And he snapped his fingers with an emphatic negative. —'We don't choose our places in life at all, my dear boy,' he went on after a pause: 'we get tumbled into them by pure caprice of circumstances. If I'd chosen mine, instead of strictly meditating the thankless muse, I'd certainly have adopted the exalted profession of a landed proprietor, with the pleasing duty of receiving my rents (by proxy) once every quarter, and spending them royally with becoming magnificence, in noble ways, like the Greek gentleman one reads about in Aristotle. I always admired that amiable Greek gentleman: the *megalo-preps*, I think Aristotle calls him. His berth would suit me down to the ground. He had nothing at all of any sort to do, and he did it most gracefully with princely generosity on a sufficient income.'

'But you *must* write poetry for something or other, Massinger; for if it isn't rude to make the suggestion, you can hardly write it, you know, for a livelihood.'

Massinger's dark face flushed visibly. 'I write for fame,' he answered majestically, with a lordly wave of his long thin hand. 'For glory—for honour—for time—for eternity. Or, to be more precisely definite, if you prefer the phrase, for filthy lucre. In the coarse and crude phraseology of political economists, poetry takes rank nowadays, I humbly conceive, as a long investment. I'm a journalist by trade—a mere journeyman journalist; the gushing penny-a-liner of a futile and demoralised London press. But I have a soul within me above penny-a-lining: I aspire ultimately to a pound a word. I don't mean to live and die in Grub Street. My soul looks forward to immortality, and a footman in livery.'

Relf smiled dubiously, and knocked the ash off his cigar into the Japanese tray that stood by his side. 'Then you look upon poetry merely as an

ultimate means of making money?' he suggested, with a deprecatory look.

'Money! Not money only, my dear fellow, but position, reputation, recognition, honour. Does any man work for anything else? Any man, I mean, but cobblers and enthusiasts?'

'Well, I don't know. I may be an enthusiast myself,' Relf answered slowly; 'but I certainly do work at art to a great extent for art's sake, because I really love and admire and delight in it. Of course I should like to make money too, within reasonable limits—enough to keep myself and my people in a modest sort of way, without the footman or the eligible family residence. Not that I want to be successful, either: from what I've seen of successful men, I incline to believe that success as a rule has a very degenerating effect upon character. Literature, science, and art thrive best in a breezy, bracing air. I never aim at being a successful man myself; and if I go on as I'm doing now, I shall no doubt succeed in not succeeding. But apart from the money and the livelihood altogether, I love my work as an occupation. I like doing it; and I like to see myself growing stronger and freer at it every day.'

'That's all very well for you,' Massinger replied with another expansive wave of his graceful hand. 'You're doing work you care for, as I play lawn-tennis, for a personal amusement. I can sympathise with you there.—Let's quit the subject. It turns me always into a gloomy pessimist.—What are you going to do with yourself this summer?'

'Me? Oh, just the usual thing, I suppose. Going down in my tub to paint sweet mudbanks off the coast of Suffolk.'

'Suffolk to wit! I see the finger of fate in that! Why, that's just where I'm going, too. I mean to take six or eight weeks' holiday, if a poor drudge of a journalist can ever be said to indulge in holidays at all—with books for review, and proofs for correction, and editorial communications for consideration, always weighing like a ton of lead upon his unhappy breast: and I propose to bury myself alive up to the chin in some obscure, out-of-the-way Suffolk village they call Whitstrand.—Have you ever heard of it?'

'Oh, I know it well,' Relf answered with a smile of delightful reminiscence. 'It's grand for mud. I go there painting again and again. You'd call it the funniest little stranded old-world village you ever came across anywhere in England. Nothing could be uglier, quainter, or more perfectly charming. It lies at the mouth of a dear little muddy creek, with a funny old mill for pumping the water off the sunken meadows; and all around, for miles and miles, is one great flat of sedge and seapink, alive with water-birds and intersected with dikes, where the herons fish all day long, poised on one leg in the middle of the stream as still as mice, exactly as if they were sitting to Marks for their portraits.'

'Ah, delightful for a painter, I've no doubt,' Hugh Massinger replied, half yawning to himself, 'especially for a painter to whom mud and herons are bread and butter, and brackish water is Bass and Allsopp; but scarcely, you'll admit, an attractive picture to the inartistic public, among whom

I take the liberty, for this occasion only, humbly to rank myself. I go there, in fact, as a martyr to principle. I live for others. A member of my family—not to put too fine a point upon it, a lady—abides for the present moment at Whitestrand, and believes herself to be seized or possessed by prescriptive right of a lien or claim to a certain fixed aliquot portion of my time and attention. I've never admitted the claim myself (being a legally-minded soul); but just out of the natural sweetness of my disposition, I go down occasionally (without prejudice) to whatever part of England she may chance to be inhabiting, for the sake of not disappointing her foregone expectations, however ill-founded, and be the same more or less.—You observe, I speak with the charming precision of the English statute-book.

'But how do you mean to get to Whitestrand?' Relf asked suddenly after a short pause. 'It's a difficult place to reach, you know. There's no station nearer than ten miles off, and that a country one, so that when you arrive there, you can get no conveyance to take you over.'

'So my cousin gave me to understand. She was kind enough to provide me with minute instructions for her bookless wilds. I believe I'm to hire a costermonger's cart or something of the sort to convey my portmanteau; and I'm to get across myself by the aid of the natural means of locomotion with which a generous providence or survival of the fittest has been good enough to endow me by hereditary transmission. At least, so my cousin Elsie instructs me.'

'Why not come round with me in the tub?' Relf suggested good-humouredly.

'What? your yacht? Hatherley was telling me you were the proud possessor of a ship.—Are you going round that way any time shortly?'

'Well, she's not exactly what you call a yacht,' Relf replied, with an apologetic tinge in his tone of voice. 'She's only a tub, you know, an open boat almost, with a covered well and just room for three to sleep and feed in. She's a perfect treasure to a marine painter in the mud-and-buoy business. But I won't for a moment pretend to say she's comfortable for a landsman. If you come with me, in fact, you'll have to rough it.'

'I love roughing it.—How long will it take us to cruise round to Whitestrand?'

'Oh, the voyage depends entirely upon the wind and tide. Sailing-boats take their own time. The *Mud-Turtle*—that's what I call her—doesn't hurry. She's lying now off the Pool at the Tower, taking care of herself in the absence of all her regular crew; and Potts, my mate, he's away in the north, intending to meet me next week at Lowestoft, where my mother and sister are stopping in lodgings. We can start on our cruise whenever you like—say, if you choose, to-morrow morning.'

CHAPTER II.—DOWN STREAM.

Tide served next morning at eleven; and punctual to the minute—for, besides being a poet, he prided himself on his qualities as a man of business—Hugh Massinger surrendered himself in due course by previous appointment on board the *Mud-Turtle* at the Pool by the Tower. But his

eyes were heavier and redder than they had seemed last night; and his languid manner showed at once, by a hundred little signs, that he had devoted but small time since Relf left him to what Mr Herbert Spencer periphrastically describes as 'reparative processes.'

The painter, attired for the sea like a common sailor in jersey and trousers and knitted woollen cap, rose up from the deck to greet him hospitably. His whole appearance betokened serious business. It was evident that Warren Relf did not mean to play at yachting.

'You've been making a night of it, I'm afraid, Massinger,' he said, as their eyes met. 'Bad preparation, you know, for a day down the river. We shall have a lippy sea, if this wind holds, when we pass the Nore. You ought to have gone straight to bed when you left the club with me last evening.'

'I know I ought,' the poet responded with affected cheerfulness. 'The path of duty's as plain as a pikestaff; but the things I ought to do I mostly leave undone; and the things I ought not to do, I find, on the contrary, vastly attractive. I may as well make a clean breast of it. I strolled round to Pallavicini's, after you vacated the Row last night, and found them having a turn or two at lansquenets. Now, lansquenets's an amusement I never can resist. The consequence was, in three hours I was pretty well cleaned out of ready cash, and shall have to keep my nose to the grindstone accordingly all through what ought by rights to have been my summer holiday. This conclusively shows the evils of high play, and the moral superiority of the wise man who goes home to bed and is sound asleep when the clock strikes eleven.'

Relf's face fell several tones. 'I wish, Massinger,' he said very gravely, 'you'd make up your mind never to touch those hateful cards again. You'll ruin your health, your mind, and your pocket with them. If you spent the time you spend upon play in writing some really great book now, you'd make in the end ten times as much by it.'

The poet smiled a calm smile of superior wisdom. 'Good boy!' he cried, patting Relf on the back in mock approbation of his moral advice. 'You talk for all the world like a Sunday-school prize-book. Honest industry has its due reward; while pitch-and-toss and wicked improper games land one at last in prison or the workhouse. My dear Relf, how on earth can you, who are a sensible man, believe all that antiquated nursery rubbish? As a matter of fact, it is always the good boys who pull the plums with self-appreciative smile out of the world's pudding? Far from it: quite the other way. I have seen the wicked flourishing in my time like a green bay-tree. Honest industry breaks stones on the road, while successful robbery or successful gambling rolls by at its ease, cigar in mouth, lolling on the cushions of its luxurious carriage. If you stick to honest industry all your life long, you may go on breaking stones contentedly for the whole term of your natural existence. But if you speculate boldly with your week's earnings and land a haul, you may in time set another fellow to break stones for you, and then you become at once a respectable man, a capitalist, and a baronet. All the great fortunes we see

in the world have been piled up in the last resort, if you'll only believe it, by successful gambling.'

'Every man has a right to his own opinion,' Warren Relf answered with a more serious air, as he turned aside to look after the rigging. 'I admit there's a great deal of gambling in business; but anyhow, honest industry's a simple necessary on board the *Mud-Turtle*.—Come aft, here, will you, from your topsy-turvy moral philosophy, and help me out with this sheet and the mainsail.'

Massinger turned to do as he was directed, and to inspect the temporary floating hotel in which he was to make his way contentedly down to the coast of Suffolk. The *Mud-Turtle* was indeed as odd-looking and original a little craft as her owner and skipper had proclaimed her to be. A centre-board yawl, of seventeen tons registered burden, she ranked as a yacht only by courtesy, on the general principle of what the logicians call excluded middle. If she wasn't that, why, then, pray, what in the world was she? The *Mud-Turtle* measured almost as broad across the beam as she reckoned feet in length from stem to stern; and her skipper maintained with profound pride that she couldn't capsize—even if she tried—in the worst storm that ever blew out of an English sky. She drew no more than three feet of water at a pinch; she could go anywhere that a man could wade up to his knees without fear of wetting his tucked-up breeches. This made her a capital boat for a marine artist to go about sketching in; for Relf could lay her alongside a wreck on shallow sands, or run her up a narrow creek after picturesque waterfowl, or approach the riskiest shore to the very edge of the cliffs, without any reference to the state of the tide, or the probable depth of the surrounding channel.

'If she grounds,' the artist said enthusiastically, expatiating on her merits to his new passenger, 'you see it doesn't really matter twopence; for the next high tide'll set her afloat again within six hours. She's a great opportunist: she knows well that all things come in time to him who can wait. The *Mud-Turtle* positively revels in mud; she lies flat on it as on her native heath, and stays patiently without one word of reproach for the moon's attraction to come in its round to her ultimate rescue.'

The yawl's accommodation was opportunist too: though excellent in kind, it was limited in quantity, and by no means unduly luxurious in quality. She was a working-man's yacht, and she meant business. Her deck was calculated on the most utilitarian principles—just big enough for two persons to sketch abreast; her cabin contained three wooden bunks, with their appropriate complement of rugs and blankets: and a small and primitive open stove devoted to the service of the ship's cookery, took up almost all the vacant space in the centre of the well, leaving hardly room for the self-sacrificing volunteer who undertook the functions of purveyor and bottle-washer to turn about in. But the lockers were amply stored with fresh bread, tinned meats, and other simple necessities for a week's cruise. Thus equipped and accounted, Warren Relf was accustomed to live an outdoor life for weeks together with his one like-minded chum and companion.

As for Hugh Massinger, a confirmed landsman, the first few hours' sail down the crowded Thames appeared to him at the outset a perfect phantasmagoria of ever varying perils and assorted terrors. He composed his soul to instant death from the very beginning; not, indeed, that he minded one bit for that: the poet dearly loved danger, as he loved all other forms of sensation and excitement: they were food for the Muse; and the Muse, like Blanche Amory, is apt to exclaim, 'Il me faut des émotions!' But the manifold novel forms of enterprise as the lumbering little yawl made her way clumsily among the great East-Indiamen and big ocean-going steamers, darting boldly now athwart the very bows of a huge Monarch-liner, insinuating herself now with delicate precision between the broadsides of two heavy Rochester barges, and just escaping collision now with some laden collier from Cardiff or Newcastle, were too complicated and too ever-pressing at the first blush for Massinger fully to take in their meaning at a single glance. Hugh Massinger was at once amused and bewildered by the careless confidence with which his seafaring friend dashed boldly in and out among brigs and schooners, smacks and steamships, on port or starboard tack, in endless confusion, backing the little *Mud-Turtle* to hold her own in the unequal contest against the biggest and swiftest craft that sailed the river. His opinion of Relf rose rapidly many degrees in mental register as he watched him tacking and luffing and scudding and darting with cool unconcern in his toy tub among so many huge and swiftly moving monsters.

'Port your helm!' Relf cried to him hastily once, as they crossed the channel just abreast of Greenwich Hospital. 'Here's another sudden death down upon us round the Reach yonder!' And even as he spoke, a big coal-steamer, with a black diamond painted allusively on her bulky funnel, turning the low point of land that closed their view, bore hastily down upon them from the opposite direction with menacing swiftness. Massinger, doing his best to obey orders, grew bewildered after a time by the glib rapidity of his friend's commands. He was perfectly ready to act as he was bid when once he understood his instructions; but the seafaring mind seems unable to comprehend that landsmen do not possess an intuitive knowledge of the strange names bestowed by technical souls upon ropes, booms, gaffs, and mizzen-masts; so that Massinger's attempts to carry out his orders in a prodigious hurry proved productive for the most part rather of blank confusion than of the effect intended by the master skipper. After passing Greenhithe, however, they began to find the channel somewhat clearer, and Relf ceased for a while to skip about the deck like the little hills of the Psalmist, while Massinger felt his life comparatively safe at times for three minutes together, without a single danger menacing him ahead in the immediate future from port or starboard, from bow or stern, from brig or steamer, from grounding or collision.

About two o'clock, after a hot run, they cast anchor awhile out of the main channel, where traders ply their flow of intercourse, and stood by to eat their lunch in peace and quietness under the lee of a projecting point near Gravesend.

'If wind and tide serve like this,' Relf observed philosophically, as he poured out a glassful of beer into a tin mug—the *Mud-Turtle's* appointments were all of the homeliest—'we ought to get down to Whitestrand before an easy breeze with two days' sail, sleeping the nights in the quiet creeks at Leigh and Orfordness.'

'That would exactly suit me,' Massinger answered, draining off the mugful at a gulp after his unusual exertion. 'I wrote a hasty line to my cousin in Suffolk this morning telling her I should probably reach Whitestrand the day after to-morrow, wind and weather permitting.—I approve of your ship, Relf, and of your tinned lobster too. It's fun coming down to the great deep in this unconventional way. The regulation yacht, with sailors and a cook and a floating drawing-room, my soul wouldn't care for. You can get drawing-rooms galore any day in Belgravia; but picnicking like this, with a spice of adventure in it, falls in precisely with my own view of the ends of existence.'

'It's a cousin you're going down to Suffolk to see, then?'

'Well, yes: a cousin—a sort of a cousin: a Girton girl: the newest thing out in women. I call her a cousin for convenience' sake. Not too nearly related, if it comes to that; a surfeit of family's a thing to be avoided. But we're a decadent tribe, the tribe of Massinger; hardly any others of us left alive; when I put on my hat, I cover all that remains of us; and cousinhood's a capital thing in its way to keep up under certain conditions. It enables a man to pay a pretty girl a great deal of respectful attention, without necessarily binding himself down in the end to anything definite in the matrimonial direction.'

'That's rather a cruel way of regarding it, isn't it?'

'Well, my dear boy, what's a man to do in these jammed and crushed and overcrowded days of ours? Nature demands the safety-valve of a harmless flirtation. If one can't afford to marry, the natural affections *will* find an outlet, on a cousin or somebody. But it's quite impossible, as things go nowadays, for a penniless man to dream of taking to wife a penniless woman and living on the sum of their joint properties. According to Cocker, nought and nought make nothing. When a man has no patrimony, he must obviously make it up in matrimony. Only, the great point to avoid is letting the penniless girl meanwhile get too deep a hold upon your personal feelings. The wisest men—like me, for example—are downright fools when it comes to high play or the domestic instincts. Even Achilles had a vulnerable point, you know. So has every wise man. With Achilles, it was the heel; with us, it's the heart. The heart will wreck the profoundest and most deliberate philosopher living. I acknowledge it myself. I ought to wait, of course, till I catch the eminent alderman's richly endowed daughter. Instead of that, I shall doubtless fling myself away like a born fool upon the pretty cousin or some other equally unprofitable investment.'

'Well, I hope you will,' Relf answered, cutting himself a huge chunk of bread with his pocket clasp-knife. 'I'm awfully glad to hear you say so. For your own sake, I hope you'll keep your

word. I hope you won't stifle everything you've got that's best within you for the sake of money and position and success.—Have a bit of this corned beef, will you?—A woman who sells herself for money is bad enough, though it's a woman's way—they've all been trained to it for generations. But a man who sells himself for money—who takes himself to market for the highest bidder—who makes capital out of his face and his manners and his conversation—is absolutely contemptible, and nothing short of it.—I could never go on knowing you, if I thought you capable of it. But I don't think you so. I'm sure you do yourself a gross injustice. You're a great deal better than you pretend yourself. If the occasion ever actually arose, you'd follow your better and not your worse nature.—I'll trouble you for the mustard.'

ASSOCIATION.

I WAS walking the other day through one of the leading thoroughfares in London, when the sun suddenly blazed forth, illuminating a gilt decoration over a shop door and rendering it for the moment conspicuous above its surroundings. The glorified object consisted of two gigantic arms, clad in voluminous sleeves, the arms terminating in hands which were clasped in a death-like grip. Above, were the words 'Association of Capital and Labour;' and the sight of the device and legend brought into my mind a meaning altogether different from that which the word Association conveys.

We have all heard of spiritual mediums, people whose souls are attuned to such fine issues that they are able to act as intermediaries between the spirit-world and those mortals who, by reason of their coarser mould, are debarred this ethereal intercourse. Few of us enjoy the somewhat doubtful advantages of this communion, but all are conscious at times of that subtle and mysterious link between the spiritual and material life, which is known as the power of association. It is exercised through the medium of the senses, of which the most fertile in influence are sound, sight, and scent; the weakest of the five in this capacity being touch and taste.

As sound is conveyed to our ears in its highest form through the divine art of music, it follows that in that form it becomes the strongest agent of association. Who cannot recall occasions in his life when some melody, once known and loved, but long forgotten, burst on his ear, carrying his soul back in a lightning flash to the past, and dissolving the palpable and sentient present into a dim unreality? At such moments, the man who has borne 'blasts of adversity and frosts of fate,' only to grow hardened in the process, becomes weak as a child in the presence of a power mightier than himself. He does well to be humble and reverent under its influence, for it may be the Eternal Spirit is speaking to him through the channel of association.

Many and varied are the emotions awakened by music, and there is not a note in the scale of feeling which does not vibrate to its touch. The

following story illustrates one phase of its power. It was told by a man full of years and honours, the revered head of a beautiful English home.

Many years before, the license of unbridled youth had banished him from his native land. Relatives and friends alike had refused further assistance, and at last the prodigal found himself at the antipodes, friendless and unknown. Lacking utterly the moral stamina necessary in such a case, he sank from bad to worse. One day, having wandered for many hours, absorbed in melancholy thought, he found himself in a scene of peculiar wildness. Giant rocks and awful chasms surrounded him, while the unbroken stillness of evening intensified the gloom of the scene. Suddenly the demon of self-slaughter entered the unhappy man; the means were ready to hand. There, at his feet, was a lake, whose dark waters would soon close the record of a wasted life. None would learn his fate, for in that remote spot human foot seldom trod—seldom, but yet sometimes, for at that moment, sweet and clear, rang out a sound which moved the exile as all the thunders of Jove could not have done. It was a traveller, singing as he went a ballad which had been a favourite with the unhappy man in his distant home. What pen could describe the emotions it aroused at such a time! 'It changed,' said the narrator of the incident, 'the very current of my being; it roused in me a passionate yearning to see my home again; and I vowed solemnly that, please God, I would yet be worthy to return to it.'

An equally forcible though by no means so pleasing an example of the power of association through music is afforded by the following anecdote. A lady was present at an entertainment given by a famous amateur Club. Throughout the evening she had been remarkable, even in that brilliant assembly, for her sparkling humour and the brightness of her sallies; but no sooner had the first bars of Haydn's famous *Surprise Symphony* been played, than she was seen to change colour; a ghastly pallor overspread her face, while her eyes were distended as if in the extremity of fear. Greatly alarmed, her friends bore her from the room, and with some difficulty restored her from a prolonged fainting-fit. 'That dreadful music—that dreadful music!' were the first words she spoke; nor was it until long afterwards that the following explanation of her panic was given to an intimate friend.

Many years previous, she was sitting one day in a room with an elder sister, who was taking a music lesson. The piece under practice was the *Surprise Symphony*, and over and over again, with tedious persistence, did the exacting master make his pupil travel through the symphony, until every note of it was indelibly fixed in the mind of the listener. As the piece was in progress for about the twentieth time, a piercing shriek was heard; the door of the music-room was flung open, and a valued servant, who had been a mother to the sisters all their lives, staggered in, the blood flowing from a fearful wound in her side—staggered, and fell to the floor in a death-agony. She had been murdered by a foreign servant whom she had dismissed for theft, and the assassin had sprung on her from a dark recess in the corridor. Though the horror of that scene had necessarily somewhat faded with the lapse of time, it was revived in all its ghastliness for one

of its witnesses when she again heard the *Surprise Symphony*.

To most of us, some homely sound is fraught with power to bring back scenes of the past. I have a special fondness—which I fear is almost peculiar to myself—for the buzzing of a fly, and was delighted one early winter when a fine large pompous fellow made his home in my room, and whenever the air was warmed, would fly about with tuneful buzz. I had only to close my eyes, and, though winter and rough weather raged without, for me the sun again shone, the birds sang, myriads of insects made a concert of sweet sounds, and the indescribable essence of summer returned.

Somewhat less subtle, but still very powerful, is sight as a medium of association. It has chanced to most of us to revisit some scene after long absence, and to be so moved by familiar objects, that our added years fall from us like a weight in their presence, and for a brief span our souls regain the freshness of a time when all things, even belief, were possible. The poet says, 'Ourselves we cannot re-instate,' yet that is precisely what does happen under such an influence, and our souls are 'set to the same key of the remembered harmony.' It was some such 're-instatement' as this that made Claude Melnotte (the hero in the *Lady of Lyons*), returning home, after many changes and vicissitudes, cry with a passionate rush of memory, 'How the old time comes o'er me!'

A comical instance of the power of sight to arouse association occurs to me. I was present with some schoolfellows at a concert. The entertainment was held in a large public room, which was decorated in the oriental fashion, gilt dragons forming a conspicuous item in the *ensemble*. Now, in this same room we had previously attended a great many religious meetings, for in that fashionable seaside resort, the number and class of persons who undertake to expound the Scriptures are remarkable, even in an age of progress. No sooner had we glanced at the familiar surroundings and taken our seats, than the boy next to me fell on his knees in an attitude of devout supplication. 'Get up!' said I, scandalised; 'what on earth are you doing?' He rose, gave a bewildered look round, and exclaimed: 'Why, I thought I was at a prayer-meeting!'

Very frequent are the allusions of poets to the power of association through the medium of scent. One amorous bard relates that, having succeeded, after countless struggles, in banishing a fair but too fickle Dulcinea from his heart, his whole affection for her revived on coming near a flower she was in the habit of wearing. This was rather hard on the poet, and the best we can hope is that his woes were no stronger than the verses in which he expressed them.

That the power of association is possessed by the lower animals is beyond dispute, and has been frequently proved. A friend of mine has a parrot, a bird of unusual attainments, who is in the habit of accompanying his mistress in her summer excursions. Once, during their sojourn in a small village, the bird's cage was placed in the garden, to the unbounded delight of the villagers, who assembled in the evening and listened to his prattle. Among many rustic expressions which Polly picked up was one which

was his peculiar delight. A woman was in the habit of screaming for her child all over the place in a very shrill voice, rising in crescendo at the last syllable, and 'Han-nee, Han-nee!' rang out in the air at all hours. So exact was the bird's imitation, that the unfortunate child was for ever running to and fro, supposing herself called. A winter in town and indoor pursuits banished this cry from Polly's repertoire, and was apparently forgotten by him. However, strange to say, no sooner did he find himself the following summer once more in a village garden than he screamed out 'Han-nee!' and continued to do so at intervals during his stay. What was this, if not the revival of association through the medium of sight?

A similar instance came under my notice some time since. A friend in the country had a valuable Newfoundland dog, between whom and a neighbouring retriever there was a family feud of long standing. The Newfoundland, whom we will call 'Montague,' accompanied his mistress one day on a visit to the home of his rival, 'Capulet.' Those were the days of goloshes, now happily departed. The lady removed hers and placed them inside the door of the house, before entering the drawing-room. Up started Capulet, who had been lying in ambush, seized a golosh in his mouth, and was about to make off with it, when he was pinioned by Montague. A deadly combat ensued. At length, Montague, the victor, seizing his mistress's goloshes, ran off with them triumphantly through the village, and never stopped until he had deposited them safely inside his own door. After that day, never did he pass the gates of his enemy's domain without going in and bearing away some trophy—if only a stick or a stone—as an emblem of his mastery. Years passed by, during which Montague wandered in many lands. He was an old dog when he returned to his early home, and that of Capulet was inhabited by strangers, who knew him not; nevertheless, the first time he passed by the old scene of combat, he disappeared within the gates, and when next seen, was running up his own garden path with a huge hunting-boot between his teeth!

We all know that when the routine of our daily life has been for some time monotonous in its regularity, the slightest deviation from that order will appear to change the very essence of life, as much as if the entire *mise en scène* had been shifted. This is simply because a link in the chain of association has been broken, and it proves how marvellous is its power to weld together the spiritual and material. Doubtless, the most mysterious and subtle form taken by association is embodied in that indescribable sensation that the scene passing before our eyes is in all its minutiae but a reproduction of something which has happened to us before. That this feeling is of comparatively rare occurrence, I believe; but when it is experienced, so overpowering is it, and none the less so because evanescent, that it produces an absolute sense of awe. Whence it comes, its origin and causes, are among the many things which, though dreamt of in our philosophy, have certainly not been explained by it. Some have thought it traceable to dreams, the memory of which, though long faded, revived on a corresponding combina-

tion of circumstances in waking moments; others consider it a shadowy link to some pre-natal existence, of which 'our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.'

THE GOLDEN INCUBUS.

A NOVELETTE.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER I.—SIR JOHN DRINKWATER IS ECCENTRIC.

'You're an old fool, Burdon, and it's all your fault.'

That's what Sir John said, as he shook his Malacca cane at me; and I suppose it was my fault; but then, how could I see what was going to happen?

It began in 1851. I remember it so well because that was the year of the Great Exhibition, and Sir John treated me to a visit there; and when I'd been and was serving breakfast next morning, he asked me about it, and laughed and asked me if I'd taken much notice of the goldsmiths' work. I said I had, and that it was a great mistake to clean gold plate with anything but rouge.

'Why?' he said.

Because, I told him, if any of the plate-powder happened to be left in the cracks, if it was rouge it gave a good effect; but if it was a white preparation, it looked dirty and bad.

'Then we'll have all the chests open to-morrow, James Burdon,' he said; 'and you shall give the old gold plate a good clean up with rouge, and I'll help you.'

'You, Sir John?'

He nodded. And the very next day, he sent all the other servants to the Exhibition, came down to my pantry, opened the plate-room, and put on an apron just like a servant would, and helped me to clean that gold plate. He got tired by one o'clock, and sat down upon a chair and looked at it all glistening as it was spread out on the dresser and shelves—some bright with polishing, some dull and dead and ancient-looking. Cups and bowls and salvers and round dishes covered with coats of arms; some battered and bent, and some as perfect as on the day it left the goldsmith's hands.

I'd worked hard—as hard as I could, for sneezing, for I was doing that half the time, just as if I had a bad cold. For every cup or dish was kept in a green baize bag that fitted in one of the old ironbound oak chests, and these chests were lined with green baize. And all this being exceedingly old, the moth had got in; and pounds and pounds of pepper had been scattered about the baize, to keep them away.

'I'll have a glass of wine, Burdon,' Sir John says at last; 'and we'll put it all away again. It's very beautiful. That's Cellini work—real,' he says, as he took up a great golden bowl, all hammered and punched and engraved. 'But the whole lot of it is an incubus, for I can't use it, and I don't want to make a show.'

'Take a glass yourself, my man,' he said, as I got him the sherry—a fresh bottle from the outer cellar. 'Ha! at a moderate computation, that old gold plate is worth a hundred thousand pounds; and a hundred thousand pounds at only three per cent. in the funds, Burdon, would be three thousand a year. So you see I lose that income by letting this heap of old gold plate lie locked up in those chests.—Now, what would you do with it, if it were yours?'

'Sell it, Sir John, and put it in houses,' I said sharply.

'Yes, James Burdon; and a sensible thing to do. But you are a servant, and I'm a baronet; though I don't look one, do I?' he said, holding up his red hands and laughing.

'You always look a gentleman, Sir John,' I said; 'and that's what you are.'

'Please God, I try to be,' he said sadly. 'But I don't want the money, James; and these are all old family heirlooms, that I hold in trust for my life, and have to hand over—bound in honour to do so—to my son.—Look!' he said, 'at the arms and crest of the Boileaus on every piece.'

'Boileau, Sir John?'

'Well, Drinkwater, then. We translated the name when we came over to England. There; let's put it all away. It's a regular incubus.'

So it was all packed up again in the chests; for he wouldn't let me finish cleaning it, saying it would take a week; and that it was more for the sake of seeing and going over it than anything that he had had it out. So we locked it all up again in the plate-room. And it took five waters hot as he could bear 'em to wash his hands; and even then there was some rouge left in the cracks, and in the old signet ring with the coat of arms cut in the stone—same as that on the plate.

I don't know how it was; perhaps I was out of sorts, but from that day I got thinking about gold plate and what Sir John said about its worth. I knew what 'incubus' meant, for I went up in the library and looked out the word in the big dictionary; and that plate got to be such an incubus to me that I went up to Sir John one morning and gave him warning.

'But what for?' he said. 'Wages?'

'No, Sir John. You're a good master, and her ladyship was a good mistress before she was took up to heaven.'

'Hush, man, hush!' he says sharply.

'And it'll break my heart nearly not to see young Master Barclay when he comes back from school.'

'Then why do you want to go?'

'Well, Sir John, a good home and good food and good treatment's right enough; but I don't want to be found some morning a-weltering in my gore.'

'Now, look here, James Burdon,' he says, laughing. 'I trust you with the keys of the wine-cellar, and you've been at the sherry.'

'You know better than that, Sir John. No, sir. You said that gold plate was an incubus, and such it is, for it's always a-sitting on me, so as I can't sleep o' nights. It's killing me, that's what it is. Some night I shall be murdered, and all that plate taken away. It ain't safe, and it's cruel to a man to ask him to take charge of it.'

He did not speak for a few minutes.

'What am I to do, then, Burdon?'

'Some people send their plate to the bank, Sir John.'

'Yes,' he says; 'some people do a great many things that I do not intend to do.—There; I shall not take any notice of what you said.'

'But you must, please, Sir John; I couldn't stay like this.'

'Be patient for a few days, and I'll have something done to relieve you.'

I went down-stairs very uneasy, and Sir John went out; and next day, feeling quite poorly, after waking up ten times in the night, thinking I heard people breaking in, as there'd been a deal of burglary in Bloomsbury about that time, I got up quite thankful I was still alive; and directly after breakfast, the wine-merchant's cart came from St James's Street with fifty dozen of sherry, as we really didn't want. Sir John came down and saw to the wine being put in bins; and then he had all the wine brought from the inner cellar into the outer cellar, both being next my pantry, with a door into the passage just at the foot of the kitchen stairs.

'That's a neat job, Burdon,' said Sir John, as we stood in the far cellar all among the sawdust, and the place looking dark and damp, with its roof like the vaults of a church, and stone flag floor, but with every bin empty.

'Going to lay down some more wine here, Sir John?' I said; but he didn't answer, only stood, with a candle in the arched doorway, which was like a passage six feet long, opening from one cellar into the other. Then he went up-stairs, and I locked up the cellar and put the keys in my drawer.

'He always was eccentric, before her ladyship died,' I said to myself; 'and now he's getting worse.'

I saw it again next morning, for Sir John gave orders, sudden-like, for everybody to pack off to the country-house down by Dorking; and of course everybody had to go, cook and house-keeper and all; and just as I was ready to start, I got word to stay.

Sir John went off to his club, and I stayed alone in that old house in Bloomsbury, with the great drops of perspiration dripping off me every time I heard a noise, and feeling sometimes as if I could stand it no longer; but just as it was getting dusk, he came back, and in his short abrupt way, he says: 'Now, Burdon, we'll go to work.'

I'd no idea what he meant till we went down-stairs, when he had the strong-room door opened and the cellar too; and then he made me help him carry the old plate-chests right through my pantry into the far wine-cellar, and range them one after the other along one side.

I wanted to tell him that they would not be so safe there; but I daren't speak, and it was not till what followed that I began to understand; for, as soon as we had gone through the narrow arched passage back to the outer cellar, he laughed, and he says: 'Now, we'll get rid of the incubus, Burdon. Fix your light up there, and I'll help.'

He did help; and together we got a heap of sawdust and hundreds of empty wine-bottles; and these we built up at the end of the arched

entrance between the cellars from floor to ceiling, just as if it had been a wine-bin, till the farther cellar was quite shut off with empty bottles. And then, if he didn't make me move the new sherry that had just come in and treat that the same, building up full bottles in front of the empty ones till the ceiling was reached once more, and the way in to the chests of gold plate shut up with wine-bottles two deep, one stack full, the other empty.

He saw me shake my head, as if I didn't believe in it; and he laughed again in his strange way, and said: 'Wait a bit.'

Next morning, I found he'd given orders, for the men came with a load of bricks and mortar, and they set to work and built up a wall in front of the stacked-up bottles, regularly bricking up the passage, just as if it was a bin of wine that was to be left for so many years to mature; after which the wall was whitewashed over, the men went away, and Sir John clapped me on the shoulder. 'There, Burdon!' he said; 'we've buried the incubus safely. Now you can sleep in peace.'

'Yes, Sir John.'

'I ought by rights to kill you now, and bury you in the sawdust, to make you keep the secret. But I'll let you off, for I don't think *you* will tell.'

CHAPTER II.—WHY EDWARD GUNNING LEFT.

It's curious how things get forgotten by busy people. In a few weeks I left off thinking about the hiding-place of all that golden plate; and after a time I used to go into that first cellar for wine with my half-dozen basket in one hand, my cellar candlestick in the other, and never once think about there being a farther cellar; while, though there was the strong-room in my pantry with quite a thousand pounds-worth of silver in it—perhaps more—I never fancied anybody would come for that.

Master Barclay came, and went back to school, and Sir John grew more strange; and then an old friend of his died and left one little child, Miss Virginia, and Sir John took her and brought her to the old house in Bloomsbury, and she became—bless her sweet face—just like his own.

Then, all at once I found that ten years had slipped by, and it set me thinking about being ten years nearer the end, and that the years were rolling on, and some day another butler would sleep in my pantry, while I was sleeping—well, you know where—cold and still—and that then Sir John would be taking his last sleep too, and Master Barclay be, as it says in the Scriptures, reigning in his stead.

And then it was that all in a flash something seemed to say to me: suppose Sir John has never told his lawyers about that buried gold plate, and left no writing to show where it is. I felt quite startled, and didn't know what to think. As far as I could tell, nobody but Sir John and I knew the secret. Young Master Barclay certainly didn't, or else, when I let him carry the basket for a treat, and went into the cellar to fetch his father's port, he, being a talking, lively, thoughtless boy, would have been sure to say something. His father ought certainly to tell him

some day; but suppose the master was taken bad suddenly with apoplexy and died without being able—what then?

I didn't sleep much that night, for once more that gold plate was being an incubus, and I determined to speak to Sir John as an old family servant should, the very next day.

Next day came, and I daren't; and for days and days the incubus seemed to swell and trouble me, till I felt as if I was haunted. But I couldn't make up my mind what to do, till one night, just before going to bed, and then it came like a flash, and I laughed at myself for not thinking of it before. I didn't waste any time, but getting down my ink-bottle and pens, I took a sheet of paper, and wrote as plainly as I could about how Sir John Drinkwater and his butler James Burdon had hidden all the chests of valuable old gold cups and salvers in the inner wine-cellar, where the entrance was bricked up; and to make all sure, I put down the date as near as I could remember in 1851, and the number of the house, 19 Great Grandon Street, Bloomsbury, because, though it was not likely, Sir John might move, and if that paper was found after I was dead, people might go on a false scent, find nothing, and think I was mad.

I locked that paper up in my old desk, feeling all the while as if I ought to have had it witnessed; but people don't like to put their names to documents unless they know what they're about, and of course I couldn't tell anybody the contents of that.

I felt satisfied as a man should who feels he has done his duty; and perhaps that's what made the time glide away so fast without anything particular happening. Sir John bought the six old houses like ours opposite, and gave twice as much for them as they were worth, because some one was going to build an Institution there, which might very likely prove to be a nuisance.

I don't remember anything else in particular, only that the houses would not let well, because Sir John grew close and refused to spend money in doing them up. But there was the trouble with Edward Gunning, the footman, a clever, good-looking young fellow, who had been apprenticed to a bricklayer and contractor, but took to service instead. He did no good in that; for, in spite of all I could say, he would take more than was good for him, and then Sir John found him out.

Miss Virginia got him forgiven at least twenty times, and Mr Barclay spoke up for him too; but when it came to a smell of fire in the house, and me being woke up by Sir John and Mr Barclay at two in the morning, and we all went and found Edward dead drunk in the servants' hall, where he had been reading in bed, and the clothes all smouldering on the floor, there was a row. Sir John said he didn't mind about himself and me, for we were two old useless people, who had had our day, and smothering was an easy death, while being afterwards burnt to ashes was a good Roman kind of an end; but he wasn't going to have his son's life shortened; and he'd hang any man sooner than harm should happen to his darling, Miss Virginia.

So Edward Gunning had to go; and I breathed more freely, and felt less nervous, though I must

say I thought Sir John's remarks about me anything but kind, seeing how I had served him well, and being only seventy-one, with a good deal of work in me yet.

CHAPTER III.—MR BARCLAY THINKS FOR HIMSELF.

So another ten years had slipped away; and the house opposite, which had been empty for two years, was getting in very bad condition—I mean as to paper and paint.

'Nobody will take it as it is, Sir John,' the agent said to him in my presence.

'Then it can be left alone,' he says, very gruffly.—'Good-morning.'

'Well, Mr Burdon,' said the agent, as I gave him a glass of wine in my pantry, 'it's a good thing he's so well off; but it's poison to my mind to see houses lying empty.' Which no doubt it was, seeing he had five per cent. on the rents of all he let.

Then Mr Barclay spoke to his father, and he had to go out with a flea in his ear; and when, two days later, Miss Virginia said something about the house opposite looking so miserable, and that it was a pity there were no bills up to say it was to let, Sir John flew out at her, and that was the only time I ever heard him speak to her cross.

But he was so sorry for it, that he sent me to the bank with a cheque directly after, and I was to bring back a new fifty-pound note; and I know that was in the letter I had to give Miss Virginia, and orders to have the carriage round, so that she might go shopping.

Now, I'm afraid you'll say that Mr Barclay Drinkwater was right in calling me Polonius, and saying I was as prosy as a college don; but if I don't tell you what brought all the trouble about, how are you to understand what followed? Old men have their own ways; and though I'm not very old, I've got mine, and if I don't tell my story my way, I'm done.

Well, it wasn't a week after Mr Bodkin & Co., the agent, had that glass of wine in the pantry, that he came in all of a bustle, as he always was, just as if he must get everything done before dark, and says he has let the house, if Sir John approves.

Not so easily done as you'd think, for Sir John wasn't, he said, going to have anybody for an opposite neighbour; but the people might come and see him if they liked.

I remember it as well as if it was yesterday. Sir John was in a bad temper with a touch of gout—bin 27—'25 port, being rather an acid wine, but a great favourite of his. Miss Virginia had been crying; and I had heard Mr Barclay make use of a word that ought never to have been used in that house, unless it was by Sir John, who, being master, had a right to do as he liked. The trouble had been about Mr Barclay going away. He'd finished his schooling at college, and was now twenty-seven, and a fine strong handsome fellow, as wanted to be off and see the world; but Sir John told him he couldn't spare him.

'No, Bar,' he says in my presence, for I was bathing his foot—'if you go away—I know you, you dog—you'll be falling in love with some

smooth-faced jade, and then there'll be trouble. You'll stop at home, sir, and eat and drink like a gentleman, and court Virginia like a gentleman; and when she's twenty-one, you'll marry her; and you can both take care of me till I die, and then you can do as you like.'

Then Mr Barclay, looking as much like his father as he could with his face turned red, said what he ought not to have said, and refused to marry Miss Virginia; and he flung out of the room; while Miss Virginia—bless her for an angel—must have known something of the cause of the trouble—I'm afraid, do you know, it was from me, but I forget—and she was in tears, when there was a knock and ring, and a lady's card was sent in for Sir John: 'Miss Adela Mimpriss.'

It was about the house; and I had to show her in—a little, slight, elegantly dressed lady of about three-and-twenty, with big dark eyes, and a great deal of wavy hair.

Sir John sent for Mr Barclay and Miss Virginia, to see if they approved of her; and it was settled that she and her three maiden sisters were to have the opposite house; and when the bell rang for me to show her out, Mr Barclay came and took the job out of my hands.

'I'm very glad,' I heard him say, 'and I hope we shall be the best of neighbours;' and his face was flushed, and he looked very handsome; while, when they shook hands on the door-mat, I could see the bright-eyed thing smiling in his face and looking pleased; and that shaking of the hands took a deal longer than it ought, while she gave him a look that made me think if I'd had a daughter like that, she'd have had bread-and-water for a week.

Then the door was shut, and Mr Barclay stood on the mat, smiling stupid-like, not knowing as I was noticing him; and then he turned sharply round and saw Miss Virginia on the stairs, and his face changed.

'James Burdon,' I said to myself, 'these are girls and boys no longer, but grown-up folk, and there's the beginning of trouble here.'

ODD ACTORS.

ALTHOUGH a good stage-presence, striking face, and polished manners are much to the advantage of all adopting the stage as a profession, there have been many instances in which physical defects have been turned by actors to good account. Beauty, if of the type that a poet would call spiritual, is not for the glare of the footlights. Striking features and expressive eyes are the chief recommendations, and the cunning 'make-up' can hide a multitude of imperfections. In this way, positive ugliness is no great drawback to an actor, unless his features are absolutely distorted, as in the case of the French actor, who looked so hideous, that once in a piece where some one said to him, 'You are changing your face,' a cruel wag in the pit shouted: 'Why, let him do so.'

There are only one or two cases where persons born blind have gone on the stage; but there are numerous instances of actors sticking to their work after being afflicted with blindness. In

1744 there was a remarkable performance at Drury Lane for the benefit of a blind author named Dr Clancy. The playbill intimated that 'it was the first instance of any person labouring under so heavy a deprivation performing on the stage,' and hoped that the 'novelty as well as the unhappiness of the case would engage the favour of a British audience.' The blind man played the part of the blind prophet Teresias in the play of *Edipus*, and achieved much success. In 1790 and succeeding years of the century, we read that a manager named Briscoe, although totally blind, played in the Midland towns, representing the heroes in tragedies and the lovers in comedies. The famous Mrs Dancer was so near-sighted, that once, in an impassioned scene, having unfortunately dropped a dagger, she was unable to find it. One of the attendants tried to push it towards the actress; but it was no use; and the weapon had to be picked up and handed to her in full sight of the audience, thus entirely spoiling the scene.

Numerous stage-accidents have been caused by defective vision. There was a sad scene once at the Dublin theatre, where a young actress, who had to cross a narrow plank representing a bridge, stepped off on to a piece of gauze, and was dashed down to the well of the stage and killed. The late Herr Staudigl, too, when playing Bertram in the opera of *Robert le Diable*, could not find the 'trap' by which he had to sink into the infernal regions, and always afterwards he had to be carefully led to the spot. One of the finest actors Glasgow has produced was the late J. B. Fitzroy, who struggled for years against failing eyesight, and at last was left in darkness. At a benefit organised for him in 1878, he played Sampson Burr in the *Porter's Knot*; and those who witnessed that memorable performance will not soon forget the emotion experienced as the blind old man tottered on to the stage, friendly hands in the 'wings' pushing on his porter's barrow. Although that was his 'last appearance,' he was induced to make some other appearances, and among other parts played one of the witches in *Macbeth*.

There have been one or two instances of insane persons playing parts, the most remarkable being that of a Mrs Verbruggen towards the close of the last century. She lost her reason owing to a disappointment in love, and had to be placed under restraint. Having escaped one afternoon from her attendants, she wandered back to the theatre, where, oddly enough, the play was *Hamlet*. As Ophelia, she had often gained much applause on these very boards. The unfortunate lady concealed herself till Ophelia's cue came, whereupon she rushed on the stage before the real Ophelia could enter. The stage-manager was filled with astonishment, a feeling which changed to wonder and awe as he contemplated the thrilling rendering of the mad scene. Poor Mrs Verbruggen was not 'playing' the part; she was Ophelia. It is recorded that 'Nature having made this final effort, her vital powers failed her.'

Dumb actors can of course only appear in pantomime, and that very imperfectly. There are no notable cases; but several good actors have been quite deaf. Hinton, a Birmingham actor, was so deaf that some one had always to stand

in the wings and let him know by a movement when to speak. There is the notable modern instance of the late J. B. Buckstone. How we used to look forward to the visits of the Haymarket Company—a fine combination originally, for Buckstone,

As every well-bred person should,
Kept the best company he could.

He was latterly 'as deaf as a post;' and it was only by intently watching the lips of the other actors and marking the expression of their faces, that he was able to 'pick up his cue.' The difficulty of acting under these circumstances may be imagined; but there was no real falling-off in 'Buckie's' inimitable humour. Of course, his difficulties were fewer in his own pieces; but he could not always be writing dramas, for—as he remarked once, with mingled drollery and pathos—he got to be so busy writing 'orders,' that he had no time for other literary work. Poor old Buckie! his last years were clouded by darker sorrows than deafness. They ought not to have been so, as the venerable comedian really deserved the compliment paid him in 1876 by Mr Gladstone: 'You are, like me, an old public servant.'

Many mummers have suffered from faulty limbs. The famous Foote had to get his left leg amputated, and afterwards wrote the *Lame Lover*, in which he appeared as Sir Luke Limp, and gave a comical account of his loss: 'I have neither strain, splint, spavin, nor gout; have no fear of corns or kibes, and no dread lest any fool should kick my shins or tread on my toes. A leg forsooth—a mere nothing—a very redundancy.' Unfortunately, we cannot all look on our losses in such a philosophical fashion. Charles Mathews the elder was crippled for life by an accident, and once played the part of a lame harlequin in an extravaganza specially written for him. Numerous stories of cripples are told in connection with minor theatres. We remember once seeing in a penny gaff, as the temple of cheap art is called, a young man acting who was supported by a crutch, and we were told that he was regularly in the company, and played all kinds of parts. We should like to have seen him try his hand, or rather his foot, at Romeo, especially when climbing up the balcony! Gout, that most painful and aristocratic of complaints, is no stranger to the stage. A celebrated actor used to play some of his parts seated during the entire performance with his limbs wrapped in flannel; and a well-known comedian of our own day is sometimes seen, in his funniest scenes, to writhe in agony from the same cause.

Hunchbacks have a very small choice of plays. *Richard III.* and the *Hunchback* have both been played by real hunchbacks; but, as a rule, people whose backs are 'all there' would be preferred. A little padding makes quite an effective hunch. Some years ago, a hunchback named Mr Norton went about playing parts suitable to him. He was rather a clever actor, and made a hit in the pantomime of *Humpty Dumpty*.

Drunken actors are fortunately becoming scarcer every day, although it cannot be said that the cause of temperance has as yet many adherents in 'the profession.' Volumes could be filled with the ludicrous exploits of inebriated mummers;

but perhaps it is best to forget the follies of the past.

Child actors and actresses have long been a recognised institution on the stage, but it is a pity to see them introduced unless when absolutely necessary. Of late years, we have had some remarkable instances of precocity, especially in the Children's Opera Companies, and in the recent production of the sensational piece *Human Nature*. Some of our greatest actresses have been on the stage almost from infancy; but it seems to be true that very few great actors have been on the boards as children. During a performance at Aberdeen, some years ago, we were struck with the many curious ways there are of turning an honest penny. The play was a version of the *Heart of Midlothian*, and the sensation scene was the smashing of the prison gate, after which a crowd rushed in, prominent amongst the people being Dumbiedykes with Effie's child. The management, not content with a 'dummy' baby, hired a 'sonsie' young Scotch-woman to bring her baby to the theatre every night at the hour required. We were much struck with the appearance of this youngster—a fine healthy boy of a few weeks old—sleeping peacefully in his mother's arms till the time came for his performance. There was an involuntary scream of excitement from those behind on one occasion when Dumbiedykes fell over a beam as he ran on, but luckily the baby was unharmed. It cried lustily, and of course the audience laughed—audiences always do seem to laugh at every awkward *contretemps*.

We could speak feelingly of the parts enacted by those unfortunate people whom we call 'supers,' but do not deem it necessary to add another to the many denunciations which have been hurled at their stupid heads. After all, they work pretty hard for their shilling a night, and the lot of many of them is so utterly wretched that it seems a positive cruelty to be hard on them.

There is yet another species of Odd Actors, but not belonging to the human family; we refer to the 'lower animals,' many of which have reached a high degree of perfection in their parts. Dogs have been the most successful, and have often been introduced in romantic and sensational plays. In such pieces, we have seen dogs pull ropes, ring bells, and otherwise distinguish themselves. In a recent production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there was a pack of real bloodhounds introduced, and their savage baying had certainly a stirring effect on the audience. In 'variety' entertainments, many animals perform tricks—even pigs have been shown to possess much intelligence by the well-known clown, Mr Walker—but we wish to talk only of the 'legitimate drama.' The horse is not often introduced on the stage, unless under very close supervision, for he is apt to take fright too easily. There have, however, been some astonishing performances seen in such plays as *Mazeppa*; and some years ago, Mr George Rignold created a sensation in *Henry V.* by the realistic dash with which he brought up the rear in the triumphal procession, mounted on his white charger Crispin. About ten years ago, we remember seeing a sensational piece, the *Brigand's Bride*, in which a handsome gray mule plunged into a river (of

cloth), and saved his master's little girl from a canvas grave. Except for an occasional 'walk-on'—as in the case of the royal camel in the *Sultan of Mocha*—few animals, except dogs and horses, have been used in serious drama. In the magnificent production of *Round the World in Eighty Days*, at the Paris Porte St-Martin, however, the stage in one of the tropical scenes was converted into a vast cage filled with wild animals. And in pantomimes, as every schoolboy knows, all sorts and conditions of beasts and birds have contributed their share to the amusement of the British public.

MY FIRST BEAR.

DID any of my readers ever see a wild bear? Not one of the shivering, half-starved animals to be found in the country menagerie with staring coat and bleary eyes, looking anything but fierce as it crouches in its corner insensible to the 'stirring-up' of the attendant's stick, or pacing aimlessly across its cage and nibbling in the friendliest way the nuts which the fearless schoolboy tenders—but a real, roaring, unchained wild bear. The one is very different from the other. Before I knew what a wild bear really was, I had a great contempt for the tribe, and often dreamed of the slaughter I would work if I could only come across a few good specimens. I got the chance one day when I least expected it. It was in September 1885, in Manitoba, towards the close of the Riel Rebellion. I had been sent from Battleford with a detachment of mounted police to scour the country as far as Stony Lake in search of several half-breeds and Indians who were wanted for complicity in the murders of the white settlers at Frog Lake. It was on the homeward journey that I met my bear. We had left Frog Lake in the gray dawn of the morning, and had ridden steadily along all the hot day, pausing only for an hour by an alkaline marsh-pond to water the horses and eat a meal. The police were riding 'easy,' with unbuttoned jackets, and pipes in their mouths; and the prisoners, wrapped in their gaudy blankets, were huddled together in the wagons, asleep for the most part, quite indifferent to the jolting of their carriages and the blistering heat. I had ridden myself so long, that my horse 'Dragoon,' a magnificent animal of seventeen hands, and a pure Broncho, showed signs of fatigue; and I had eased him for a few miles by tying him to the tail-end of a buckboard into which I jumped for a little rest. My companions were two Indian prisoners, young fellows, and both entertaining and interesting to the last degree.

Pas-qui-ac, the elder, was tall and strong, magnificently built, and accounted the best long-distance runner of his tribe. More than once he offered to run for his liberty against any horse in my little troop, an invitation which I was obliged to decline. Mass-ega-wap, the younger, was a mere lad, fine in limb and feature, and with large, melting, coal-black eyes, which would have been a fortune to any Belgravia belle. (Pas-qui-ac was tried for arson on my return to Battleford, but although acquitted by the jury, was held on another charge of horse-stealing, and sent back to Edmonton by the police. Mass-ega-wap was found guilty of manslaughter,

and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment in the Wood Mountain Penitentiary at Winnipeg, from which he was subsequently discharged, on account of the general amnesty granted by Her Majesty the Queen.)

Shortly before sundown, the sharp eyes of Pas-qui-ac descried a small black object almost on the horizon line, and as we neared it, his excitement knew no bounds, for he declared it to be an antelope. Mass-ega-wap, not long behind his dusky brother in the discovery, was also certain that it was a large head of game; and it was amusing to see the frantic gesticulations and hear the guttural chatter of these native hunters as they grew more and more excited. When we came to within five hundred yards of the place where it lay, apparently asleep, I fancied I could discern an animal, but to my unpractised eyes it seemed no larger than a dog, for this extraordinary discrepancy between the real and the imagined size of objects is well known on the prairie. At anyrate, it was now certain that a wild animal of some sort was before me, and so far unheeding of my presence. To seize my Winchester and ram a few shells into my pocket took but a moment, and the next saw me out of the buckboard and into the saddle again. With the reins hanging on his neck, and guiding 'Dragoon' with my knees, I loaded as I rode, and managed to get within three hundred yards of my victim, when, to my surprise, he rose, and standing high on his hind-legs, proclaimed himself to be a bear. The sight of the galloping horse must have disconcerted him somewhat, for he dropped at once on all-fours and turned tail. It was with difficulty I gave him a snap-shot as he ran, for he was far to my right; but I could just hear his scream of defiance as 'Dragoon' threw up his heels and bolted. I had never fired a shot from his back, and had taken it for granted that he would 'stand the racket.'

After a circuitous gallop, during which I bewailed my ill-luck, and wondered if I should get within range again, I managed to pull up in the neighbourhood, indicated by two little shrubs, of where I had fired my shot. I tried in vain to track by blood or footmark the retreating quarry, for the hard sandy soil refused to give a sign, and there was nothing for it but to ride ahead and hope. I had not far to go, for, after a canter up a steepish bit of slope, not two hundred yards away, was my bear, standing on his hind-legs, roaring with fury and full of fight. Then followed a brief but ineffectual fight with my horse. Neither voice nor spur availed to force him another inch nearer the pawing adversary; and fearful of losing the game, but without a thought as to the recklessness of the proceeding, I jumped from his back, and saw him flying away while I advanced alone. It will be forgiven me, I trust, if I acknowledge that during these moments I was excited; I know it was not the correct thing to do, and most hunters are so cool and collected on paper—are they not?

I walked on quickly till I was about a hundred yards from Master Bruin, and determining to make a sure shot, I knelt and aimed at him. He did not look very big, and all my nervousness had disappeared as I pulled the trigger. For a second I was blinded by the smoke; but I heard the thud of the bullet; and before I could rise,

the bear was coming at me, stumbling along with a broken shoulder and screaming with fury. If he had looked insignificant a moment before, he seemed big enough now! How loud his scream was, how fast his gallop, how sharp and white his teeth! Retreat was impossible. I was only fifty yards from him now, and to run meant simply to be overtaken and killed; so I knelt again with a strange calmness I could not understand. I remember that I heard the twitter of a bird near by, and noticed the sky growing red with the sinking sun as I raised my rifle. How near he was! What a long aim I took, straight at his head. As I fired, he stopped an instant, turned right round, and ran away from me! I found afterwards that I had hit him right in the throat. I fancy he must have been delirious, if bears ever arrive at such a stage, and imagined, after he turned and ran, that he was still making for me. I was in no hurry to follow him at too close a distance, and I let him run until I marked him into a thicket of trees half a mile away. Then I followed slowly, tracking him easily step by step by his heavy blood-trail. As I entered the thicket, however, the trail was lost; and I peered about here and there, longing to catch another glimpse of him, when suddenly, just at my feet there rose a mighty roar, that made my heart stand still and my cheeks blanch with fear. Half hidden by the trailing vines, and not to be distinguished from the blackened stumps about me, lay the bear in his death-agony, but possessed of sufficient strength still to make an angry bound, half jump, half stumble, in my direction. Mechanically, I thrust the muzzle of my rifle at his head, fired again straight into his ear, and Bruin fell for the last time—dead! I confess that I was afraid for some minutes to make a close examination of the beast. How often I had dreamed of such a scene—how different from the dream was the reality!

A shot at the other end of the thicket made known to me that help was at hand; for the advent of 'Dragoon' riderless and covered with foam had sent a squad of men to search for me in the wilderness. The bear was dragged to the nearest buckboard, and carried there till camp was pitched for the night. He was a fair-sized beast, in fine condition, and weighed, at a rough guess, about three hundred and fifty pounds.

The delight of Pas-qui-ac and Mass-ega-wap when they saw the carcase knew no bounds. To themselves belonged the honour of the original discovery, and this fact they proclaimed on all sides again and again. And to me, the Pale-face, was not praise also due, for had I not gone forth unaided to fight the bear, and conquered him? That night, when the camp-fires were blazing and the silver stars were twinkling overhead, I was halted as I made my usual visit to the prisoners' tent, and made to listen while old Kee-way-tin sang my praises and christened me Wass-sass-ega-ya (The Red Deer's Horn), in token of my skill and prowess. Pas-qui-ac and Mass-ega-wap volunteered to skin the bear on condition that they should have the entrails for their supper (a favourite Indian dish). This was gladly promised, and the skinning was done with surprising skill and quickness. The carcase was afterwards cleaned and quartered, the sharpening of the knives and

the clank of the butcher's leg-irons making music the while. It was with fear that I sat down to the first bear-steak; but who shall tell of its goodness and worth? Was it because my own hand had slain the bear, or because I was tired and very hungry?—or was it because it was a novel dish? Who can tell? But it was more delicious than the finest Club steak I had ever tasted. I had bear's meat for three days on the homeward march, and enough left to feast the mess with for a day on my return to Battleford. The claws were mounted as watch-charms and given to wondering friends; the teeth made brooches for others; and the skin, rich, soft, and ebony black, adorns my sleigh, keeps me warm in spite of Canadian frost and snow, and sets me always thinking of the autumn evening far away when I bagged my first bear.

SLIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES.

It is stated that when Leopold von Ranke began to collect facts for his History, a singular accident occurred in his native town. A bridge gave way one morning, and some persons were swept away in the current beneath. Von Ranke, who was absent at the time, on his return inquired into the details of the catastrophe. 'I saw the bridge fall,' said one of the neighbours. 'A heavy wain had just passed over it, and weakened it. Two women were on it when it fell, and a soldier on a white horse.'—'I saw it fall,' declared another; 'but the wain had passed over it two hours previous. The foot-passengers were children; and the rider was a civilian on a black horse.'—'Now,' argued Von Ranke, 'if it is impossible to learn the truth about an accident which happened at broad noonday only twenty-four hours ago, how can I declare any fact to be certain which is shrouded in the darkness of ten centuries.' To this trivial incident—which to many persons would have borne no lesson—was due much of his caution and impartiality.

A few moments' consideration will convince any one that some of the most momentous crises in history have hinged upon very slight circumstances. A glass of wine, for instance, changed the history of France for nearly twenty years. Louis-Philippe, king of the French, had a son, the Duke of Orleans, and heir to the throne, who always drank only a certain number of glasses of wine, because even one more made him tipsy. On a memorable morning he forgot to count the number of his glasses, and took one more than usual. When entering his carriage, he stumbled, frightening the horses, and causing them to run. In attempting to leap from the carriage, his head struck the pavement, and he soon died. That glass of wine overthrew the Orleans rule, confiscated their property of twenty million pounds, and sent the whole family into exile.

If Mr Grenville had not carried, in 1765, his memorable resolution as to the expediency of charging stamp duties on the plantations of America, the Western world might still have been under British rule. In connection with this matter, there is another slight, albeit remarkable, circumstance, which may be told in Thackeray's own words. 'It was strange,' says he, 'that, in a savage forest of Pennsylvania, a young Virginian officer should fire a shot, and waken up a war

which was to last for sixty years, which was to cover his own country and pass into Europe, to cost France her American colonies, to sever ours from us, and create the great Western republic; to rage over the Old World when extinguished in the New; and of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, to leave the prize of the greatest fame with him who struck the first blow.'

If the nose of Cleopatra had been shorter, says Pascal, the condition of the world would have been different. His meaning is, that if Cleopatra had had a nose short to deformity, she would have failed to attract Antony, who would not have been drawn into the conduct which culminated in the loss of the battle of Actium, which loss made way for the close of the Roman Republic in the inauguration of the Roman Empire.

Dyspepsia has been the cause of many momentous crises. A leg of mutton is said to have controlled the tide of Leipsic's battle; and the consequences of the indigestion of a certain duchess are proverbial.

The great failure of the potato crop in Ireland cannot be called a slight circumstance, yet it was comparatively slight compared with the momentous changes which it brought about; for the repeal of the corn-laws was hastened by the potato famine. As Lord Beaconsfield has observed, 'This mysterious but universal sickness of a single root changed the history of the world.'

Many men have been drawn to their destiny by the most trivial occurrences. Fenimore Cooper became a novelist through his wife's challenge. One evening, while reading a novel, he threw it down, saying: 'I believe I could write a better book myself.'—'Let me see you do it,' said his wife with a smile. In a few days he had written several chapters of *Precaution*, which, when finished, he published at his own expense. The novel attracted little attention; but it gave Cooper an inkling of his capacity for story-writing, and the *Spy*, his next novel, appealed so strongly to the patriotic sympathies of his countrymen, that it became a great success. Hawthorne, too, was induced to write the *Scarlet Letter* by a remark of his wife.

If Cowley had not found the *Faery Queen* in his mother's parlour, it is just possible that he would never have been a poet. Giotto, one of the early Florentine painters, might have remained a rude shepherd boy if a sheep drawn by him upon a stone had not attracted the notice of Cimabue. Opie might have perished in obscurity if he had not looked over the shoulder of his companion, Mark Oates, while he was drawing a butterfly. Had his friend and companion escaped the thunderstorm at Erfurt, Luther might have been a lawyer.

To exhaust the list of discoveries which have been made through slight circumstances is beyond our power. A few, however, may be noted. Porcelain was discovered by an alchemist while he was trying to find a mixture of earths that would make durable crucibles. If a watchmaker's apprentice had not held up some spectacle glasses between his thumb and finger, telescope lenses might never have been known; and if the shop of a Dublin tobacconist had not been destroyed by fire, Lundyfoot snuff would certainly not have given joy to thousands of snuff-takers. If a few drops of aquafortis had not dropped upon the

spectacles of a Nuremberg glass-cutter, etching on glass might still have remained unknown. Had not the wife of an English papermaker accidentally let a blue bag fall into a vat of pulp, blue-laid paper, the invention of which brought a fortune to the papermaker, might have still to be invented. Lithography, too, was perfected through suggestions made by accident. These few instances, which are not so well known as many others, and which are not intended to be representative, we have jotted down at random. Doubtless, many of the more important inventions due to trifling circumstances will be familiar to our readers.

A well-known Paris scientist, Dr Delaunay, has made some curious discoveries which show the connection between little and great things. To ascertain the qualities of an applicant cook, he says it is sufficient to give her a plate to clean, a sauce to make, and watch how she moves her hand in either act. If she moves it from left to right, or in the direction of the hands of a watch, you may trust her; if the other way, she is certain to be stupid and incapable. The intelligence of people may also be gauged, the Doctor further says, by asking them to make a circle on paper with a pencil, and noting in which direction the hand is moved. The good students in a mathematical class draw circles from left to right. The inferiority of the softer sex, as well as the male dunces, is shown by their drawing from right to left. Asylum patients do the same. In a word, says the Doctor, centrifugal movements are characteristic of intelligence and higher development; centripetal, are a mark of incomplete evolution. A person, as his faculties are developed, may even come to draw circles in a different way from what he did in his youth.

Sir Walter Scott, when walking along the banks of the Yarrow, saw Mungo Park throwing stones into the water and anxiously watching the bubbles that succeeded. In reply to Scott's inquiry as to the object of his occupation, the great traveller said he was thinking how often he had thus tried to sound the rivers in Africa, by calculating how long a time had elapsed before the bubbles rose to the surface. This was a slight circumstance, but the traveller's safety frequently depended upon it.

Now that electricity is used for so many purposes, the slight pressure of a small button frequently effects wonders. So it is, as has been well observed, with the machinery of human life—a slight circumstance may frequently produce the most momentous results.

PAPER BOTTLES.

An attempt now being made on an extended scale to introduce bottles made of paper into this country merits some passing notice. The paper-bottle industry, which has achieved considerable success in Chicago, and is gradually extending throughout the United States, has not yet obtained any development on this side of the Atlantic. Foremost amongst the advantages accruing from this new adaptation of paper is the fact that the bottles are unbreakable; whilst the cost at which they can be placed on the market is considerably lower than that of articles of the same size in glass, stoneware, or tin. A great saving in weight is moreover effected, a desideratum of no small

moment where cost of carriage of large numbers has to be taken into consideration; whilst the cost of packing is reduced to a minimum, for breakage in transit, which is a constant source of loss with glass bottles, is obviously impossible. Special machinery is employed in the manufacture of paper bottles. A long strip of paper of requisite thickness having been formed into a tube by bending around a circular 'mandrel,' is covered externally with an outer glazed sheet, bearing any printed labels to be employed; the tube is then cut into short lengths, to the ends of which are added tops, bottoms, and necks of paper—or of wood, if special strength is desired—nothing further being necessary beyond pouring in and lining the insides with a composition, which on setting will effectively resist the action of acids, spirits, inks, dyes, &c. The utilisation of paper is constantly receiving new adaptations, a bare enumeration of which would constitute a formidable list; whilst enough has been said to demonstrate that the latest development of this material in the bottle-making industry bids fair to hold a not unimportant part in the varied uses now obtained from paper.

MY SNOW IMAGE.

I.

I RAISED an image when the snow lay white—
An image fair, with eyes that sparkled bright,
And form that shone serenely through the night.

The frost was bitter, and the tempest blew
So keen, it pierced the forest through and through;
Yet still my figure stood, and stronger grew.

At last the breeze blew mild, and sunlight shone,
When lo, I looked!—my image fair was gone—
Dead ashes for its feet, its heart a stone.

O Sorrow, was thy lesson told in vain?
Methought, that if I built from care and pain
An image bright, some glory would remain.

II.

Ere long the year to ripen fullness grew:
Glad swallows through the sunny copses flew,
And where the image stood, bright daisies blew.

All gone the icy stillness and the snow;
I wandered through the dewy meads, and lo!
Like thawing streams I felt my lifeblood flow.

O snowy image, did I sigh for thee?
The May-blooms hung in garlands from the tree,
And golden kingcups dappled hill and lea.

No more of ice my handiwork shall rise,
But weaved of sunny light from earth and skies,
And gleanings gathered in by grateful eyes:

No more of cold contentment or despair,
But steadfast Hope, whose breath shall be a prayer,
And Love, whose light shall show that life is fair.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

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